



IPB Annual Conference - Washington D.C. - speeches now on website

Representatives of IPB member organisations and other peace movements from 21 countries, as well as individual participants, gathered at Georgetown University in Washington DC on the weekend of November 14-15, 2009 for the annual IPB conference - the first held in the USA since 1904. The conference was followed by the IPB Council, a planning meeting for the nuclear abolition activities at the NPT Review next May, and a day-seminar on military spending. Speeches and/or articles supplied by conference presenters are available at <http://www.ipb.org> (front page). A second series of materials will be posted here as soon as we have them.

Afghanistan, reactions to Obama's speech

President Barack Obama's recent decision to send 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan has generated many responses from peace movements, for example:

Mouvement de la paix (France, IPB member) :

<http://www.mvtpaix.org/communiqués/2009/Afghanistanrenforts-2009.php>

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (US, IPB member):

http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2009/12/08_napf_afghanistan_statement.php

Phyllis Bennis of IPS:

http://www.ips-dc.org/articles/president_obamas_afghanistan_escalation_speech

Joseph Gerson (AFSC) *Obama's Afghan 'Strategy' Another American Tragedy.*

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/12/02-9>

The UK Stop the War Coalition calls on everyone to sign the **Troops Home** petition. (Deadline for signature is Dec. 17). It will be delivered to Gordon Brown on Dec. 21 by families who lost their loved ones in Afghanistan, those who have relatives in the war and soldiers who served in Afghanistan. The online version is available at: <http://www.petitiononline.com/mfaw09/petition.html> . The downloadable and printable version can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/rNaTZ> .

Representatives of 34 anti-war groups sent a letter to Obama condemning the war and calling for its end.

The letter is available at: <http://stopwar.org.uk/content/view/1638/1/>

The Socialist Party USA argues that the real reason for the war is seizing natural resources, expanding unregulated markets and taking control of the Middle East.

<http://www.independentpoliticalreport.com/2009/12/socialist-party-usa-protests-obamas-escalation-in-afghanistan/>

See also: *The Secret US War in Pakistan*: <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20091207/scahill>

IPB's Disarmament for Development programme

In 2005 IPB launched a major new programme, designed to reflect widespread public concern at the rapid rise in global military spending (totalling \$1464 billion in 2008); and the evidence that weapons -- such as small arms, cluster bombs, landmines -- seriously impede sustainable development. Post 9-11, the failure of military solutions should be obvious to all. IPB advocates reductions in defence budgets and the adoption of a 'human security' approach. Activities organised in pursuit of these goals include: seminars, publications, website, e-newsletter, exhibitions and a media programme. National and international networks are gradually being developed.

Military Spending and Investment

Unfulfilled promise to cut US military spending

As the sixth yearly Report of the Task Force on a Unified Security Budget for the United States, FY 2010 reveals, Obama administration has not kept its promise to shift priorities and resources in the national security field. The report shows that the combined balance of spending on military forces,

homeland security and non-military foreign engagements has not changed. The 2010 fiscal year request shows that 87% of the security resources will be spent on military force, the same percentage as during the Bush administration. Obama promised to reform the defence budget and cut waste, particularly referring to old weapon systems that were not used. The administration did eliminate the F-22 fighter jet, but the end result remains the same and the security budget remains out of balance.

The report was prepared by Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies. Its task force includes academics, members of non-partisan organisations and experts on homeland security, budgeting and non-proliferation. The report recommends that the U.S. eliminates the Trident II nuclear missile, reduces its nuclear arsenal to 600 warheads, cuts waste by better management of contracts, and creates a Quadrennial National Security Review.

More at <http://www.ips-dc.org/reports/usbfy2010> and

<http://www.registercitizen.com/articles/2009/11/26/opinion/doc4b0e085faa84e927103380.txt>

Calls to cut Trident in pre-budget report

A coalition of prominent figures from British public scene has called on the government to stop the replacement of Trident and to spend the money on social needs. The new **Rethink Trident** campaign coalition includes celebrities, scientists, academics, former military, writers and politicians. The statement published by the coalition, at the beginning of December, has officially re-launched the campaign started in 2007. More at <http://www.cnduk.org/>

Opinion: Our money for their military

Jad Abdallah, a member of the Campus Antiwar Network at Hunter College, discusses the U.S. excessive military spending which has a negative impact on the country's economy. He mentions that 51 % of federal budget is spent on defence, a big part of which is maintaining overseas military bases. The U.S. government spends as much on military as the rest of the world combined. At the same time the unemployment rate is rising and the cost of public services, such as transportation, has increased. Also, 1.5 million people use food banks while the cost of sending and supporting a single soldier in Afghanistan equals \$1 million. Abdallah calls on the U.S. government to withdraw the armies from Iraq and Afghanistan and to cut the waste by spending the money on American citizens.

<http://socialistworker.org/2009/12/04/our-money-for-their-military>

Our Taxes, Our Lives campaign

A year-long project entitled **Our Taxes, Our Lives** has been launched by the Ministry for Peace campaign in the UK. The aim of the campaign is to create structures in the government whose aim would be to reduce violence, with the major focus on structural violence. According to Ministry for Peace, structural violence means economic, political and social structures that repress, harm or kill. The campaign brings together national organisations and advocates that defend public services and welfare benefits. It also encourages national public debate on how to overcome the crisis in ways that would be most beneficial for society. More at <http://www.ourtaxesourlives.org/>

Countries support ban on investment in cluster munitions

As a part of their implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, several countries have banned investment in producer companies. The ban is supported by the Cluster Munitions Coalition. So far, Belgium, Luxemburg and Ireland are the only states to ban investment in producers. A few others including Switzerland, Australia, Denmark, Norway, and New Zealand, are currently considering parliamentary action on investments and Mexico, Bulgaria and Lebanon expressed support for the ban but have not yet implemented it. These efforts have been supported by the NGO coalition, which on Oct. 29 started a disinvestment campaign. Their report *"Worldwide Investments in Cluster Munitions: A Shared Responsibility"*, lists 136 financial institutions in 16 countries involved in financing production. The European Parliament has shown support for the ban by passing a resolution calling for a moratorium on using, investing in, stockpiling, producing, transferring, or exporting cluster munitions. The December issue of *Arms Control Today* features an article on disinvestment efforts. It was published on their website on Dec. 4. http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_12/ClusterDivestment

Weapons and their impact on development

U.S. will not sign the global treaty banning landmines

The State Department announced on November 24 that the USA will not join the global treaty banning landmines. The reasons given are that the U.S. would not be able to meet its security commitments and national defence needs if it signed the Convention. The treaty has been signed by 156 countries excluding the U.S., India, China and Russia. It bans the use, transfer and production of antipersonnel mines. The U.S. is planning to send (for the first time) its observers to the Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia (Nov. 29 - Dec. 4). The U.S. has not used its antipersonnel mines since 1991; however it stockpiles 10 million mines and retains the right to use them. More at <http://alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N24329250.htm>

'Surviving the Peace' exhibition

Imperial War Museum North, Manchester (UK), is hosting a display of images that show the impact of landmines. The exhibition is entitled *Surviving the Peace*, and the pictures were taken by award-winning conflict photographer Sean Sutton. The display is the result of cooperation between the Museum and Mines Advisory Group, a Manchester-based charity. Sutton has photographed effects of landmines for 20 years, travelling to mine-infested countries such as Lebanon, Iraq and Sudan. Each year landmines kill, injure or disable 12,000 people and they are a legacy that last many years after a conflict has ended. The display is part of the Imperial War Museum North's photography season which also includes a major exhibition *Shaped by War: Photographs by Don McCullin*, opening 6 February 2010. More information at <http://north.iwm.org.uk/server/show/conEvent.3170>. Mines Advisory Group at <http://www.maginternational.org/>

UN report on global minerals and arms smuggling in DR Congo

According to a new UN report, minerals and arms smuggling remains a serious problem in eastern DRC, despite existing international sanctions, and often leads to civilians being killed by rebels and the army. Rwandan Hutu rebels from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) exploit gold and cassiterite in North and South Kivu provinces and are helped by trading networks in Uganda, Burundi and UAE. Their arms supplies come mostly from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Sudan and the army itself. The FDLR has a well-organised network that runs the movements, coordinates arms trafficking and recruits new fighters. The report urges the Security Council to ask Member States to prosecute sanctions violations by nationals and leaders of armed groups, share data on FDLR members and to prevent companies from supporting armed groups by trade in natural resources. It also calls on the Council to strengthen the UN Mission in monitoring the arms embargo in the DRC. More at:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33173&Cr=&Cr1=#>

Nuclear Disarmament

Ban Ki-moon presents next steps for a nuclear-free world

During his speech at the meeting in New York on December 8th, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, focused on his 5-point action plan to create a nuclear weapons-free world. He stressed that nations need to build on the momentum and appealed to the U.S. to adopt agreed measures on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to think about the nuclear weapon convention proposed by Malaysia and Costa Rica. He also suggested that the Security Council should meet every year to discuss disarmament and proliferation and called for greater transparency and accountability. Ban Ki-moon stressed that while pursuing nuclear disarmament, it is necessary to implement complementary measures: "The world should pursue several related measures, including eliminating other weapons of mass destruction; combating WMD terrorism; and bans on missiles, space weapons," he said. "We also must not lose sight of conventional weapons disarmament."

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/09/content_12614476.htm

Cuts to the UN anti-mine programme

Funding for the global anti-mine programme is due to be reduced by \$565 million in 2010. This means that humanitarian mine clearance will be done at a much slower pace and the future of the planned UN projects is uncertain. Last year \$518 million was spent on mine action, while only 5% of the required \$ 600 million next year has been secured so far and it is unlikely that the budget goals will be met. The EU, the US and Japan are the world's biggest donors to anti-mine programmes. Afghanistan and Sudan have the highest rates of landmine casualties. Last year, landmines and explosive remnants of war caused 5,200 deaths and injuries across 70 countries.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2009/12/2009124135926438616.html>

Other news

Oslo peace demonstration challenges Obama

A joint Norwegian peace movement demonstration took place in Oslo on December 10, the day when Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The demonstration was organized by Peace Initiative, Bring the Troops Home, The Norwegian Peace Council, and Peace and Democracy in Afghanistan. The slogans used were: **Change: Stop the war in Afghanistan, and support the democratic movements; Yes, we can: Control arms trade; Hope: No nukes; A new dawn: Stop the Israeli settlements.** The demonstration gathered 3000 participants and speakers included prominent peace activists such as Cindy Sheehan and IPB Vice-President Alyn Ware.

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/world/982339/thousands-march-for-peace-in-oslo>

World's longest peace banner

The National Academy of Youth Trust in Pakistan is preparing the world's largest peace banner. The banner is planned to be 100 km long and its aim is to raise awareness about the dangers of war against terrorism and to spread peace and brotherhood among people in Pakistan. The banner is currently 10 km long and has been signed by 350,000 people, including students, dignitaries, academics, writers and policemen. The banner will travel around the country and its aim is to gather 40 million signatures.

Resources

IANSA Women's Network Bulletin

IANSA Women's October bulletin is available on the organisation's website www.iansa.org. The main feature of the edition is a report on small arms within Bourj Al-Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon. It also contains many interesting stories such as an account of an exchange program between Chinese and African women of IANSA and an article about the rise of private security in Pakistan.

ICBL December Newsletter

The December issue of the ICBL newsletter, which was distributed during the Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World, is available at www.icbl.org. This issue contains articles on Mine Ban Treaty, Cartagena Summit, Youth Leaders Forum and the ICBL addresses to the UN First Committee. http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Library/News-Articles/08_Content/ICBL-NEWS/ICBL-News-dec-09

Calendar

Click [here](#) for IPB's international events calendar. For disarmament events, go to the comprehensive Disarmament Calendars of UN and other inter-governmental, grassroots and civil society events in key cities compiled by the [Geneva Forum](#) and by [Reaching Critical Will](#).

If you have reports of activities that are relevant to this newsletter please email them to the Secretariat.

To subscribe to or unsubscribe from this newsletter please email: mailbox@ipb.org

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